

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY S/S-O:JTHYDEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179640

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

FOL RPT PRETORIA 4016 SENT ACTION SECSTATE USUN INFO BONN
DAR ES SALAAM GABORONE LAGOS LONDON LUSAKA MAPUTO OTTAWA PARIS
JUL 16, 1978

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4016

DEPT/BONN FOR ASSISTANT SEC MOOSE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PORT, SF, WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: VAN HEERDEN'S COMMENTS ON WALVIS BAY

REF: PRETORIA 4015

1. EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR TAYLOR JULY 16 TALKED WITH NEIL
VAN HEERDEN, PIK BOTHA'S AIDE, ABOUT SAG REACTION TO
PRETORIA FIVE'S PRESENTATION ON WALVIS BAY YESTERDAY. VAN HEERDEN
SAID THE SAG'S REACTION HAD TO BE SEEN IN LIGHT OF SEVERAL
FACTORS. THE SAG, HE SAID, HAD BELIEVED THAT THE WESTERN
GOVERNMENTS PERCEIVED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION ON THE FUTURE
STATUS OF WALVIS BAY WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM FROM THE POINT
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OF VIEW OF AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA; THAT IT WAS IN EFFECT A NON-
ISSUE. SOUTH AFRICA, HOWEVER, WAS IN A DEFENSIVE FRAME OF MIND AND
UNDER THREAT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON A WIDE
RANGE OF ISSUES. INDICATIONS THAT THE SAG WAS BEING COERCED ON
THE QUESTION OF WALVIS BAY EVOKED A STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION.
VORSTER IN PARTICULAR HAS A FIXATION ON THIS ISSUE. TO HIM IT
IS A MATTER OF HONOR AND SOVEREIGNTY. BOTHA'S STORMY REACTION,

VAN HEERDEN SAID, WAS IN PART BASED ON HIS REALIZATION THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO PRESENT THE WESTERN POSITION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. SECOND, THE SAG HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, INDIVIDUALLY OR JOINTLY, WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT ON WALVIS BAY. NOW, THEY ARE TOLD THE WEST WILL SUPPORT A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. VAN HEERDEN NOTED THAT IN THE MEETING YESTERDAY, FRENCH AMBASSADOR SCHRICKE AHD EMPHASIZED THAT THE AFRICAN STATES WOULD SUBMIT A RESOLUTION ON THE SUBJECT IN ANY EVENT AND THAT THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS HAD TO DECIDE ON THEIR POSITION, AND THAT THEY HAD SOUGHT TO BRING ABOUT ACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE. VAN HEERDEN SAID THIS SUGGESTED THAT THE RESOLUTION WAS NOT A WESTERN INITIATIVE BUT RATHER THE WEST WAS ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL AND CONTAIN A MOVE BY OTHER PARTIES. BUT BEFORE THE MEETING, VAN HEERDEN SAID, BOTHA HAD BEEN TOLD BY FLEUR DEVILLIERS, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FORM LUSAKA, THAT THE WEST WAS CIRCULATING A DRAFT RESOLUTION. THIS SITUATION CONTRIBUTED TO BOTHA'S SUSPICION THAT THE SAG WAS BEING MISLED.

3. TAYLOR REMINDED VAN HEERDEN THAT THE PRETORIA FIVE IN THEIR PRESENTATION TO FOURIE ON JUNE 22 HAD INDICATED THAT THE QUESTION OF WALVIS BAY WOULD INEVITABLY ARISE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THAT OUR POSITION WOULD BE THAT THE ENCLAVE SHOULD BE A PART OF THE TERRITORY. VAN HEERDEN SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IF THE PRETORIA FIVE HAD PREFACED THEIR TALKING POINTS OF YESTERDAY WITH A DESCRIPTION
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OF THE POLITICAL CONTEXT, I.E., A RESOLUTION WAS INEVITABLE AND THE WEST WAS SEEKING FOR LANGUAGE THAT WOULD EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS BUT NOT COMPROMISE SOUTH AFRICA'S LEGAL CLAIM. THE SAG, HE SAID, HAD BELIEVED THAT THE WEST ACCEPTED THE LEGALITY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION. TAYLOR NOTED THAT THE WEST DID NOT TAKE A POSITION ON THE COMPETING LEGAL CLAIMS. VAN HEERDEN STRESSED THAT THIS HAD TO BE MADE CLEAR. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, THERE WAS CONCERN OVER WHAT MIGHT BE THE OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH OF THE RESOLUTION. WAS THERE A COERCIVE ELEMENT? DID THE SAG FACE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ISSUE UNDER THE THREAT OF SANCTIONS? TAYLOR REITERATED THE WESTERN POSITION THAT THE QUESTION WAS ONE TO BE RESOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS AND SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE SAG WOULD FIND ITS LEGAL POSITION COMPROMISED BY ANY RESOLUTION SUPPORTED BY THE WEST.

4. DURING THE CONVERSATION VAN HEERDEN RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES TO THE SAG'S FEAR OF A COERCIVE ASPECT TO THE RESOLUTION AND TO THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO THE WEST EXPLAINING THEIR SUPPORT FOR A RESOLUTION IN TERMS OF A MINIMAL, DAMAGE-LIMITING RESPONSE. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR ONE OF THE PRETORIA AMBASSADORS, PERHAPS SIR DAVID SCOTT, TO CLARIFY FURTHER BACKGROUND AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESOLUTION IN A PRIVATE

MEETING WITH BOTHA.

5. VAN HEERDEN SAID THAT BOTHA HAD INFORMED HIM LAST NIGHT THAT
VORSTER, WHO WAS SUFFERING FROM A BAD COLD AND "LOOKED LIKE
DEATH", HAD SAID HE WANTED TO CONSIDER THE MATTER FOR A DAY OR TWO.
AN HOUR AFTER TAYLOR SAW VAN HEERDEN, VAN HEERDEN CALLED TO SAY THAT
THE MINISTER WAS TAPING A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT THAT WOULD APPEAR
ON TV TONIGHT AT 8:00 PM LOCAL TIME. IF SIGNIFICANT,
WE WILL REPORT IMMEDIATE. EDMONDSON
UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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